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To: The Secretary

Thru: H - Ben H. Read
C - Matthew Nimetz

From: L - Lee R. Marks

Jonestown Update

This memorandum is to keep you informed on the status of the various Jonestown-related issues: disposition of the remains, USG funding and the House Foreign Affairs Committee ("HFAC") investigation.

Disposition of the Remains

On Thursday, March 29 the California Superior Court Judge in charge of the People's Temple dissolution proceedings ordered that all bodies of Jonestown victims at Dover Air Force Base be transported to California for burial at the expense of the People's Temple. There are 554 bodies at Dover (250 unidentified and 304 identified but unclaimed).

The judge ordered that the bodies be transported by truck but not in caravan style. The unidentified bodies will be buried in the San Francisco area. The identified bodies will be held at Oakland Army Base for 30 days (provided the USG agrees). During this time, the next of kin can claim the body and will be given up to $540 towards disposition. (Such financial assistance will only be available to those next of kin who state under oath that they are indigent.) Any bodies remaining unclaimed at the end of the 30-day period will be buried.

The People's Temple receivor and the Emergency Relief Committee ("ERC" - composed of interfaith clergy in the San Francisco area) will coordinate and implement the judge's order. They plan to meet this weekend to set a target date to begin implementing the plan.

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Although no appeal may be taken from the judge's order, a writ of prohibition could be filed. However, as yet we have no indication that anyone intends to file such a writ. USG representatives have assured the receivor and the ERC that we will cooperate fully to move the bodies from Dover Air Force Base as expeditiously as possible.

USG Funding

We successfully overcame Senator Church's objections to using AID's Contingency Fund to finance Jonestown-related expenses. We provided Committee report language to SFRC staff which AID/GC indicates has been accepted.

HFAC Chairman Zablocki has since sent a letter questioning this use of AID funds. A reply has been drafted but was not sent pending markup of the AID legislation in the HFAC. AID expects to send the reply next week and subsequently provide the long desired fund cites to DOD.

HFAC Investigation

Last week HFAC staff went to Georgetown, Guyana to interview the Ambassador and other U.S. Embassy personnel who had had any contact with the People's Temple. Pursuant to pre-agreed guidelines, these interviews were unsworn but on the record and an attorney from L was present. The staff appeared particularly concerned with Embassy personnel's understanding of the Privacy and Freedom of Information Acts, and the impact of these laws on reporting from the field. The HFAC investigation is apparently drawing to a close and they expect to issue their report in a month or two.

cc: AFA - JBushnell

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